Diagnostic Clinical Assessment

For

James McBride

**Assessment Specl:** Gelena M. Royster

**Assessment Date:** 11/30/2011

**Client:** Mr. James McBride

**Address:** Red Hook Project

795 Hicks Street Apt #411

Brooklyn NY, 11233 & Philadelphia, PA

**Phone#:** (347) 777-9311

**DOB:** September 11, 1957

**Age:** 54

**Gender:** Male

**Race:** Bi-Racial (African American & Jewish)

**Contact Person:** Mrs. Stephanie McBride

**Contact#:** (347) 973-1122

**Current Vocation:** Great Author, Wrote **“The Color of Water”** a Tenor Saxophonist in the band “Rock Bottom Remainders” and a journalist, writer in residence at the New York University

**Marital Status:** Married

**Children:** 3 Children - Azure, Jordan and Nash

**Born & Raised:** In the roaring late 60’s & 70’s the Civil Rights & Black Power era in Brooklyn, New York

**Parent(s):** Mother - Ruth McBride Jordan (died 1/9/10)

Over the course of my Mother’s life she had **6 names**:

1-Ruchel Zylska

2-Rachel Zyska

3-Rachel Shisky

4-Ruth Shisky

5-Ruth McBride

6-Ruth McBride Jordan

Father - Rev. Andrew D. McBride (died 4/5/57)

Step Father - Deacon Hunter Jordan (died 5/14/72)

**Siblings:** 12 Total McBride / Jordan Children

6 Brothers: William (died 4/17/04), Andrew, David, Richard, Hunter and Henry

5 Sisters: Rosetta McBride, Helen McBride-Richter, Dorothy McBride-Wesley, Kathy Jordan-McElroy and Judy Jordan

**Family History:** I and my 11 siblings grew up the majority of my life with our mother Rachel McBride. We were raised very religious, poverty stricken, drugs & violence everywhere. We lived in rat & roach infested Red Hooks projects in Brooklyn New York City.

**Presenting Concerns:** Mr. McBride explains; he was an angry, depressed, drug abusing rebellious child. He had a lot of insecurities and questions about himself and his siblings, his racial identity, over protective ways & emotional feelings about his Mother, Father and Step father. These are his concerns: Whenever my Mom stepped out the house with us she went into a sort of “Mental Zone”. Her attention span went no further than the five kids trailing her. We we’re all shades, she was white with long black beautiful hair and we were light shades, medium shades and darker shades with several textures of hair.

She was very, very strict when it came to education and God. She raised us to be scholastic standouts and daily enforced discipline, learning and Christianity. If we didn’t follow her instructions regarding school and our religious rituals we would get a beaten either by her, my father or step father.

He stated I’m confused about a lot of things but most of all about my color

“I didn’t know if I was a dark Jewish, Black, Mulatto or what?”   
I asked my mother “What color am I?” She replied **“You are the Color of Water”**

I relied “I really prefer to be black”

Everywhere we went people stared and made racial remarks about my bow legged white mother who had all these little black kids. “I am very scared and embarrassed for my mother!” These feelings are very hard to explain. It hurts to get glances and cackle as we ride the subway, walk into business, churches, schools and different places. He shouted out with tears streaming down his face. “None of us can help the way we are, we were born this way”

One day I was so upset at a student at my all white school. Someone in the back of the classroom whispered **“James is a Nigger!”** followed by a ripple if tittering and giggling across the room. The teacher shushed him and glared but the damaged had already been done. I said to myself, if my siblings were here they would have beat down that student. I was shy and timid, and afraid to speak up for myself. I was very ashamed of that but I couldn’t help it that’s the way I was.

My nickname my brothers & sister called was “Big Head” because my head was big but my body was skinny. Deep down inside it hurt me when they called me that name. As I entered into the tenth grade I rebelled even more. I all but drooped out of school and my grades plummeted almost immediately. I left home in the morning and just didn’t go to school. I began my own process of running, emotionally disconnecting myself from her, as if by doing so I could keep her suffering from touching me. I found myself making bad choices in my friendships and what we did to socialize and fit in with them. I was the first kid on my block to start smoking cigarettes and reefer and drinking Old English 800 malt liquor. My band buddies and I started to shoplift. Broke into cars, rail road freight cars, we got caught one time by the police and he waved his gun at us for a while and then said “You Nigger Scum I should shot you right here” That deter me. The next day I got so drunk one of my friends had to carry me home, where I peed in front of my sisters and collapsed on the floor.

Finally, they got me in the house and in my bed. When I woke up hours later, Mommy was sitting at the foot of my bed with the whipping belt in her hand. She whipped me mercilessly tears in her eyes. It didn’t help. My friends and band members became my family, and my family & mother just became people I lived with. The house was getting further and further behind and mommy didn’t have enough money to pay the bills I ignored it. To earn dough, I sold reefer, I carried a straight-edge shaving razor, I strong armed people and when they protested I would hit them. I became violent. One day my friend felt sorry for robbing a little old lady. He vowed to stop. So I began to committing the crimes. I snatched women’s purses just as I seen my mother’s purse snatched when I was eight. But in my mind the two acts were not related. I had no feelings. I squelched them over the years. Every time they surged up, I shoved them back down inside me the way you stuff clothes in a drawer and shut it. Reefer & wine helped me forget my pain. And as my pain & guilt increased so did my problems with drugs. I also suffered from flash backs from taking LSD which I had done the previous year. As it was, every single day, on the way to school, during school and on the way home I felt I had to get high. If I ran out of weed I would drink wine and if I couldn’t get that my buddy Marvin and I drunk NyQuil. I am shame to admit I had an addiction.

Time had passed I went to stay with my sister Jack and her husband for three summers straight. I experienced some things while I was there with her family and I felt impressed to get myself together before it was too late. My mother and younger siblings needed me. My sister Jack and her husband Big Richard advised me that “You have to choose between what the world expects from you and what you want for yourself” “Put yourself in God’s hand and you won’t go wrong” I knew I wasn’t raised to drink every day nor just hang out on a corner like a bum, I was educated and I had purpose. All I needed to do in times of stress was to wake up and find myself. So in the fall of 1973 I returned to New York for my junior year in high school. I resolved to jump back into my studies and rebuild myself. Like my own mother did in times of stress. I turned to God!

My siblings grew up and went to college and I became the King of the house a system my mother created as the kids grew older and went to college. We moved from NY to Delaware for a fresh new start. Finally I was a senior in high school back in NY a changed man. I kept away from the hang-out crowds and dealt with my music. The change was good for me and I gave up weed and drinking for the discipline of music of music. I was selected to travel to Europe with the American Youth Jazz Band. My high school grades were sour, my SAT’s low, but my musical & writing abilities were strong and I had good recommendations. To my utter amazement, the school accepted me. I was the eight straight child to she sent to college. The seven before me all graduated and most went on for higher degrees. On 9/1975 I packed everything I owed and went off to Oberlin College. My mother sent me to college with $14.00 all she had. I told her Thank you, kissed her and bored the bus quickly to hide my tears. I had mixed emotions because I felt I had abandon her she hated Delaware and I had talked her into staying there, and now I’m leaving. She was always sending me off on a bus someplace, to elementary school, to camp, to relatives in Kentucky, to college. She pushed me away just as she pushed my elder siblings away when we lived in New York. My mother was in love with my father. My mother & father finally got marriage after living together to protect their bi-racial relationship & mom becoming a Christian. She threatened to leave Dennis if they didn’t marry ASAP. She became pregnant with me just before he died of lung cancer. I was named after my Uncle Jim in North Carolina.

In November 1982 I took a trip to Virginia complete some research on my family history. I took with me Karen a black single parent model who called herself “Karone” Mom hated her because she was over protected of me because she had a ready made family. During that trip I attempted to find mom’s childhood friend Frances Moody who we found out later she is Frances Falcone. I also met Mr. Eddie Thompson my grandfather’s neighbor. He reluctantly told me that Rabbi Shilsky my grandfather was a very mean, prejudice and abusive man and my grandmother was terrified of him. Mamah my grandmother passes away and my mom had lots of guilt for leaving her and not seeing her before she died. She couldn’t because her family disowned her. I (James) spend time at the synagogue where his grandfather was a Rabbi. I wanted to share with my wife and children his history. Before I left Norfolk I realized “whatever I was looking for I had found it.

My mother shared with me, One night on her way home from work a black lady walked up to her and punched her so hard she fell to the floor. The lady yelled to her “Don’t disrespect me”. She went to her apartment and waited for my father to come home to approach her about the attack. One day my father became a Christian and started his own church. He repeatedly got hoarse then ill and had to stay in the hospital for an extended time. He wanted to see us kids so mom brought us to up to the hospital and waved at us from his window. Mom was 36 and had been with Dennis for 16yrs. Dad passed away and the family took his body back to High Point to lay him to rest. In October 1994 and it’s the New Brown Memorial Baptist Church 40thAnniversary and the church had a new minister. He was nothing like Pastor Brown. Mom addressed the congregation. She started off very hesitant but them she calmed down and wowed them with God’s Holy Spirit. It was ruff after Dad died, but mom is resilient she bounces back as always.

After years past Mom meet my stepfather Hunter Jordan. He loved mom dearly, his family and buddies thought he was crazy loving this woman with eight kids. He didn’t care he loved her and vowed to take care of her. They finally married and had an additional 4 kids. Total McBride kids a whopping 12.   
I’m so proud of my mom at the age of 65 she earned her college degree in social service and used her degree to volunteer at a Philadelphia pregnant unwed mother’s shelter.

In August 1993 after more than fifty years Ruthie aka Ruth McBride Jordan faced the ghosts of her past and went home to Suffolk, Virginia with me, my sister Judy, my brother Billy. They visited her old home, synagogue and found her long lost friend Frances Falcone (Moody). She was so grateful she laughed and spent some quality time with her friend. We asked mom where she wanted to be buried she said not Now York, Virginia or North Carolina. She didn’t care.

Every year we argue about where were going to celebrate Christmas.

My mom died on January 4, 2010 she was 88 years old has 23 grandkids and 5 great-grandchildren.

Mom still has the power!!!!!

**Diagnosis / Treatment:**

*I’m recommending Mr. James McBride to individual counseling and Family counseling for his siblings if and as needed. He and his family has a great support groups and systems and it is very apparent that he is not currently using, abusing nor behaving in a abusive manner that will warrant any medical, mental /emotional or legal actions at this time against himself nor his family. I will keep in contact with Mr. McBride and will re-evaluate this assessment a needed. It was a pleasure to assess Mr. McBride and his family. His interview was great and meaningful history that I will never forget. I look forward to hearing & seeing his much success in the future. I will truly miss Mrs. Ruth McBride Jordan.*

*This story was truly the “Color of Water*”

*Thank you!*

Gelena M. Royster

**Gaston College – Human Service Technology Student**

**Ms. Heather Hall**

**College Reading / Color of Water Class Project**

**11/30/2011**